



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**DETERMINANTS OF AUDIENCE TO ATTEND COMIC BOOK
FILM ADAPTATION: A STUDY CASE AT LOTUS
FIVE STAR, KOTA SAMARAHAN**

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Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Arts Management)
2016

**DETERMINANTS OF AUDIENCE TO ATTEND COMIC BOOK FILM
ADAPTATION: A STUDY CASE AT LOTUS FIVE STAR, KOTA
SAMARAHAN**

TIANG LI MIN

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor Arts with Honors
(Arts Management)

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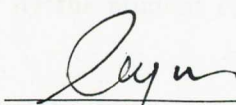
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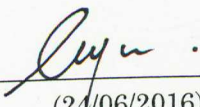
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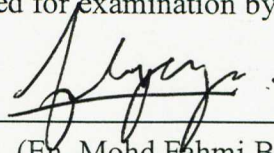
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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the influence factor that determine the audience to attend comic book film adaptation. This research employs uses and gratifications theory to conduct an audience analysis on comic book film adaptation. As we know, this theory has not yet particularly been applied to this genre, thus providing a basis for the research study. A set of self-administered questionnaire were handed out to 250 respondents who attended screening of "*Batman Vs Superman: Dawn of Justice*" at Lotus Five Star Cinema, Kota Samarahan. By using the data collected from the respondents, the factor was identified by using principal component analysis. Prior to that, descriptive statistic carries out to determine highest category of respondent's attendance. Most of the filmgoers influenced by psychological need, excitement, self-recognition, social fulfillment, and personal development as motivations to attend. The study's limitations and future research directions are discussed.

Key words: audience attendance, uses and gratification, comic book film adaptation, reasons to attend

Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti faktor pengaruh yang menentukan penonton untuk menghadiri filem adaptasi buku komik. Teori kegunaan dan kepuasan telah digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk menjalankan analisis penonton yang hadir ke filem adaptasi buku komik. Seperti yang kita tahu, teori ini belum lagi digunakan untuk genre filem ini, sekali gus menyediakan asas untuk kajian penyelidikan. Borang soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada 250 responden yang menghadiri tayangan "Batman Vs Superman: Dawn of Justice" di Lotus Five Star Cinema, Kota Samarahan. Dengan menggunakan data yang diperolehi daripada responden, prinsip komponen utama dalam analisis faktor telah digunakan. Selain itu, statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk berjangka kategori yang tertinggi oleh kehadiran responden. Kebanyakan penonton dipengaruhi oleh keperluan psikologi, keterangsangan, pengiktirafan diri, pemenuhan sosial, dan pembangunan peribadi sebagai motivasi untuk hadir. Batasan kajian dan arah penyelidikan masa depan dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

Kata kunci: kehadiran penonton, kegunaan dan keseronokkan, filem adaptasi buku komik, sebab untuk hadir.

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CHAPTER 1

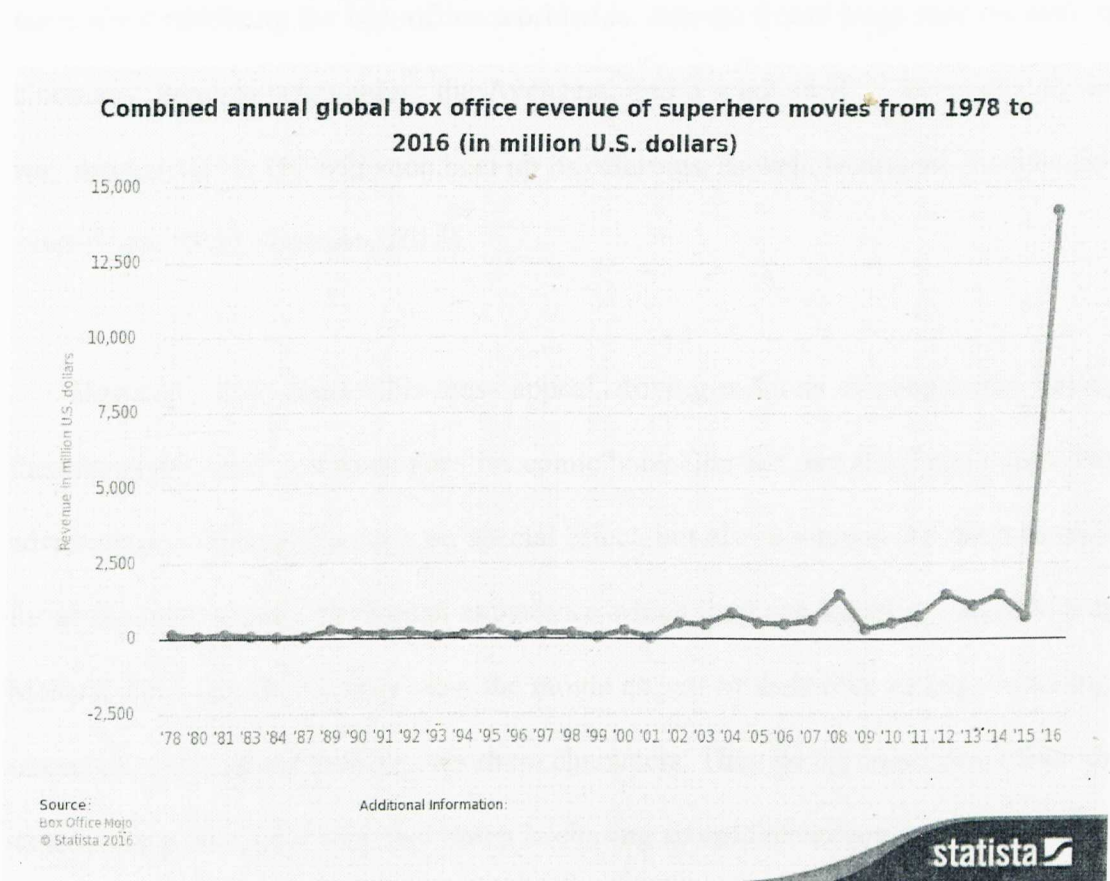
INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Films based on comics are not a new or recent phenomenon. Dates back to 1906, fancied superheroes with unusual ability from comic books, newspaper comic strips, pulp magazines and other sources, have subsequently adapted into numerous fantasy and Sci-Fi films, no matter in live action or animated, serialized and feature length, it was showed on TV and even played on the big screen with action oriented heroes and heroines (Tim, 2016).

Megahit of *Superman* (1978) and *Batman* (1989) did brings a trend of adapting superheroes onto film screenings, however, freak visual depiction does makes superhero film fall into low tide. When Gen-X came across *The X-men*, which appeared as big-budget special effects masterpieces, audience reception toward comic book film had been transformed, all about superhero and super power seem so real and no doubt, there is superhero around us (Gordon, Jancovich, & McAllister, 2007). Characters such as *Spider-Man* and *Thor* successfully captivate cinema audiences by incredible advances in special effects.

Figure 1. 1 Superhero movies global box office revenue from Box Office Mojo, retrieved from Statista, 2016



According to the record of Box Office Mojo the leading online box-office reporting service, figure shows the annual global box office revenue of superhero movies from 1978 to 2016 collected a combined 1.45 billion U.S. dollars at box offices worldwide. As many industry observers have noted, the “geek business” of comics, Sci-Fi, fantasy, horror, and video game related properties has been growing tremendously for at least the last decade, and has now started to dominate the large and small screens (Kompare, 2015).

In 2016, from 5 out of 3 top ranking movies in Malaysia box-office were hold by comic book film “*Captain America: Civil War*”, “*Batman Vs Superman: Dawn of*

Justice” and *“Dead pool”* accordingly. Now, superhero movies are all the rage and currently dominating the box-office worldwide. Marvel found huge success with its cinematic universe surrounding the Avengers, and it’s got stuff in the works all the way through 2018. DC will soon beef up its offerings, as well, with a movie slate that extends into 2020 (Romano, 2015).

However, what causes this mass appeal, driving millions of people into movie theaters every year? Audience goes for comic book film not just simply to pursue the advancement of the technology on special effect, but also a journey for them to seek for at the most nature, the human experience which they can identify. According to McKay, 2014 stated that, they view the movie as part of their own reality on the big screen and get inspired through superhero characters. They go for comic book film, in its most simple to spent their two hours in chasing an epic adventure as entertainment fulfillment.

The study reported here aims to investigates motives for audience attendance which focused on comic book film adaptation.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT/RESEARCH ISSUE

Comic book film has grossed up to \$23 million solely in Malaysia box-office performance in 2016 (Box Office Mojo, 2016).

Followed by the rising of phenomenon adapting comic books character into movie serials as early as 1906, we saw a focused studies of polarization between fans and

non-fans of comic book as comic movie audience. From previous research, the studies shown more focused on the comic book readers as audience most attended, instead of the non-readers audience proved to be fail, by the former only stands a minority within the viewer of comic book film. However, both fans and non-fans of comic book does attend as a viewer of comic book film.

Besides that, with only one category of audience consider as comic book film attendance were targeted could be floundered which happened on 1941's, adaptation of the comic book film *The Adventures of Captain Marvel* seemingly the best example of film format, which boiled down with only focused on children as only reader seems to be unsound (Marx, 2007).

Although there is a lot of research had been undertaking outside Malaysia which focused on audience analysis, however, the study aims at the most primary reasons for audience to attend comic book film are still nowhere to find. To ensure a healthy comic book film industry in the future, we need to know who and what makes up that audience today (Locker, Kaczmarek, & Braun, 2007).

Specifies the factors of influencing audiences to choose comic book film is the focus of this research, aims to provides an important foundation for marketing decisions. Get to know who is buying what is critical for any modern day business which include comic book film. It is essential to gain better understanding of the market and the audience allow us to better market and sell the products to a larger part

of audience, it does not matter whether it is fan or non-fan for the particular comic (Brett Schenker, 2014).

The researchers of the current study wish to focus on what is the primary motivator(s) of audience attend to watch a comic book film, not what motivates a person internally to watch a comic book film. The current study is performed having the person in a situation of before or after watching a movie, not examining their behavior during a movie (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of this paper are:

1. What factors influence audience attend to comic book film adaptation?

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this paper are:

1. To examine the influence factors of audience, attend to comic book film adaptation.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The result of this research paper result tend to provide a useful data for local research on identifying influence factors of audience to choose comic book film adaptation. The inquiry of mass appeal of audience heading to comic book film shall have a clue in this research.

The high grossing of this genre of movie urge the local production to gain better understanding of demographics, allows them to better market the product to a greater audience, and sell similar products better in the future.

This study also aims to show as one of the reference source for local production to produce comic book film adaptation. Provide significant information of audience profile and what they expect in the related research area.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This paper is prepared in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study and a short summary of the theoretical framework of this thesis. This chapter discusses the background of research study, objectives, research question, design, problem statement as well as preposition, definitions of terms and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review to ground the various elements which are vital to a comic book film adaptation attendance such as theory approach in this study.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology for the study, which includes the sampling method, research instrument, data collection method, and data analysis method.

Chapter 4 embodied the result of data analysis by showing the sampling results, data screening, descriptive statistics, reliability test, and factor analysis.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this study likewise the significance of the findings from regulatory and theoretical dimension. Lastly, this chapter concludes with the directions for the future research.

1.7. SUMMARY

The success of comic book film did not come in immediately after release. It has gone through the failure of comic book supply more than demand due to inaccurate targeted to audience and produce for young only reading material. This failure shown that, audience analysis is a fundamental to know who the audience is before a production. "Understanding demographics allows you to better market your product to a greater audience, and sell similar products better." (Brett Schenker, 2014). By understanding who the audience is, and what they seek in particular media, does help a production as a stepping stone to target the audience and proceed for the next process.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

There are a lot social and interpersonal factors which influence consumers to decide about any products and so happen in films also. This research analysis aims to identify the determinants factor that influence audience attend to comic book film adaptation. This chapter will discuss the produce a certain genre in film, the variables which is influence factors of this genre film audience as attenders.

2.2. HERE COMES THE COMIC BOOK FILM

As early as 1906, the association of film and comics are in form of mass-distributed media (Gordon et al., 2007).

When mentioning of superheroes, there are four particular ages referred to, especially concerning to comic book superheroes. The four major eras that widely discussed by scholars, practitioners, and fans, defined by both content and industrial practices was the "Golden Age," the "Silver Age," the "Bronze Age," and the "Dark" or "Modern" Age (Russell, 2011).

These "ages," while arguably arbitrary, serve as a significant period in which the comic industry experienced tangible shifts in industrial practices, and that is adapted in live-action television or movie series. The Golden, Silver, and Dark Ages

represented significant peaks for live-action adaptation, of activity and interest regarding the adaptation of comic book properties (Tim, 2016).

The first poster for *Thor*, showed that this film was firmly placed in the comic-book movie genre, with a color pop over a monochrome image used, which had become synonymous with comic-book movies since the success of *Sin City* (2005). Representation of the poster of particular film could show the identity of particular film stand as a genre.

From the research "Superman in Green"(Burke, 2012) found that 'comic book' used as both an adjective and noun with the terms 'comic-book movie' and 'comic book film' was most often used, suggesting the *comic-book movie* adaptation is going through a sustaining process and is beginning to be recognized by audiences as a genre. Continue they found that relay of the 'comic-book movie' between producers and consumers proved to be success, and suggest for the emerging of comic book film.

2.3. AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

A genre often includes specific narrative expectations (Turner, 1993). When there produces a film, genre is one of the determinants of the audience's choice of a film, not only in terms of whether or not they possess the competencies to appreciate genre, but in terms of what kind of film it is they want to see, and whether the specific example of that general kind of film suits their taste.

Audience are expecting with some kind vision enjoyment when they choose to attend a certain genre of movie. It is important that, let audience understand, appreciate

and enjoy in the story. In order to fulfil audience understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of a character, a good comic book film should comply with substantial vision that could interpret characters and plots successfully (Gordon et al., 2007).

Film audience are complete with certain ability to decode and enjoy films in certain genres, and are likely to watch new films in genres which they are familiar with (Bignell, 2002). Viewers would enjoy the film as film, and largely as distinct text. Intertextual between the comic book and film are excluded. What they expect in front of their eyes are a movie stand by itself. However, audience are not intertextual poor, they would compare the films to other entries in the newly emerging genre (Liam Burke, 2015).

“A film achieves maximum success when the audience for that film delights in what the film offers and shows that pleasure in a variety of ways” (“Film & Audience,” n.d.). When describing their expectations of the comic book film, the key term most often used was ‘comics’ followed closely by ‘action’ and ‘special effects’

English film director and producer Sir Alfred Hitchcock stated that “the better the villain, the better the film”. Not only is villainous character motivation important for making the darker side of reality more comprehensible for film audiences, it generally makes for superior even memorable story telling (Fischhoff, 1996). Global highest grossing comic book film *The Dark Knight* and *The Avengers*, both feature charismatic, fascinating villains opposing the heroes. Bland depiction of villain does turn down audience expectation in comic book film.

2.4. REASONS OF AUDIENCE TO ATTEND COMIC BOOK FILM

The influences to consumer's values and lifestyle decisions is affect by several factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, social class, friends, families, and other factors (Wayne D. Hoyer, Deborah J. MacInnis, 2013). It is important to know that social and psychological forces that influence audience to choose to attend comic book film adaptation.

A lot of other researcher re-emphasize that, audience decision to attend to a particular genre of film are highly dominate by their enjoyment fulfilling. According to Graeme Turner (1999), audience's decision to watch a film and in what they do in the film when they see it are all (potentially) relevant with social, cultural pleasures."

In the context of screening a comic book film, star's and director are cited to be the reasons of audience attend to watch the film (Deborah Cartmell, 1999). It is unexceptional to make the point that film stars are implicated in the film-goers' choice of movie (Turner, 1993). Famous movie star does have their supporters, besides that, audience would like to watch how their favorite actor would define the character assigned.

The advancement of the technology especially on social media development makes people can communicate globally without any barrier. People can exchange their opinion each other and accept or reject particular product simply in front of screen. A research carries out by Liam Burke, the comic book film researcher stated that,